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     UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT
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     DISTRICT OF DELAWARE
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     Case No. 01-01139
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     In the Matter of:
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     W.R. GRACE & CO., et al.,
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               Debtors.
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                          United States Bankruptcy Court
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                          Robert N.C. Nix Sr. Federal Courthouse
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                          900 Market Street
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                          Philadelphia, PA 19107
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                          February 1, 2021
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    BEFORE:
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     HON ASHELY M. CHAN
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    U.S. BANKRUPTCY JUDGE
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1	APPEARANCES:
2	
3	PACHULSKI STANG ZIEHL & JONES LLP
4	Attorney for W.R. Grace & Co.
5	919 North Market Street, 17th Floor
6	Wilmington, DE 1980
7	
8	BY: JAMES E. O'NEILL, ESQ. (TELEPHONICALLY)
9	
10	THE LAW OFFICES OF ROGER HIGGINS LLC
11	Attorney for W.R. Grace & Co.
12	516 N Ogden Avenue, Suite 136
13	Chicago, IL 60642
14	
15	BY: ROGER J. HIGGINS, ESQ. (TELEPHONICALLY)
16	
17	ALSO APPEARING TELEPHONICALLY:
18	VIKTORIYA SHPIGELMAN
19	GARY S. SMOLKER, pro se
20	
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Page 4 1 PROCEEDINGS 2 Good afternoon. This is Judge Chan's 12 o'clock list for February 1st. The matter before her is 3 W.R. Grace & Company. Motion for summary judgment and 4 motion for leave to file additional pleadings. Could 5 6 parties and counsel make their appearance, please? MR. O'NEILL: Good afternoon. This is James 7 8 O'Neill, Pachulski Stang Ziehl & Jones, on behalf of W.R. 9 Grace. And appearing with me this morning is my co-counsel 10 in this matter, Roger Higgins. Also on the line for Grace 11 is our client, Victoria Spiegelman, the senior corporate 12 counsel of Grace. And we also have our Declarant, Rosemarie 13 Lewis on the telephone today. Thank you. 14 MR. SMOLKER: I am here, too. My name is Gary 15 I am the Claimant. 16 THE COURT: Okay. All right, well, can everyone 17 hear me okay? 18 MR. SMOLKER: I can hear you okay. 19 THE COURT: Okay, good. So, I guess I would just 20 like to start this hearing with a bit of an unusual announcement. One of the immediate members in my family had 21 22 to be scheduled for an emergency procedure, so I'm actually 23 at the hospital right now. And because of that, I'd like to just try to make this hearing as efficient as possible. 24 I want to assure all of you that I've read all of 25

the pleadings that everyone has filed. And I guess in order to make this go as quickly as possible so we don't get interrupted, what I'd like to do is I'd like to first ask

Mr. Smolker if there was anything that you want to add to your argument in connection with your motion for additional time to respond to summary judgment as well as your request for additional discovery.

If there's anything that you have not already included in any of your pleadings, I'd like to hear that now. But if you've already made the statement -- you know, and I've read all about the various health issues you've had, and the scams, and everything. But is there anything that you have not raised in any of your pleadings that you would like me to consider?

MR. SMOLKER: Yes, thank you very much. I have two statements. One, I don't understand what you are referring to when you say pleadings. I have for various status conferences, and in connection with asking for status conferences I submitted various papers, and in those various papers I stated the law regarding statute of limitations, unfair competition and other matters that I didn't have time to include in my opposition or in my request for additional time. And in my request for additional time, I wasn't given enough time to make my motion for additional time, and I was deprived of the opportunity of responding to what Grace

said. And if things had gone according to what I thought was the way they were supposed to go, I would've had 21 days to fill in the blanks.

And I sent, on January 31st, a memo that contains all the relevant law concerning statute of limitations. And the law is very clear that what Grace said about the statute of limitations is completely wrong, and I'll get into that in a second. And, also, I would like to say that granting Grace's motion would nullify an important policy adopted for the benefit of the policy, which is safety, and that I put in my declaration with all the pages that I filed that I didn't have time to tie together for you that Grace failed to register with the California Department of Pesticide Regulation. I gave you the Food & Ag code. It failed to register with the Environmental Protection Agency, and I gave you the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act, 7 U.SC., Section 136 et seq.

And I also told you that Judge Janus placed a limit on the pleadings, which made it impossible for me to say everything I wanted to. And in the declaration I gave you, most importantly, but I didn't have time to discuss it, Exhibit 8. Exhibit 8 is an order signed by the Court of Appeals on January 3, 2020 that says in part: "The only issue is the procedural issue arising from the dismissal. The merits of the case are not at issue at this time and the

Court will not entertain argument pertaining to those issues."

So, in other words, the dismissal was not a decision on the merits. In fact, it was not allowed to be discussed on the merits. And even if the judge hadn't said that, which all three justices did say that, when a case is technically dismissed, it's not res judicata. It's not a dismissal on the merits.

So, when I spoke to Mr. Higgins and Mr. O'Neill at our meet and confer, they said that their entire motion was based on that it had been dismissed, which is an invalid reason because that's not a decision on the merits. And it was expressly said by the Court of Appeals that they wouldn't entertain any comment on the merits. And that it was because the statute of limitations for personal injury had run, which is completely wrong.

And in my memo I give you all the code sections on statute of limitations. Statute of limitations for personal injury or any case starts or commences when the complaint naming the people are filed. And that's the date it is.

They say because I amended my complaint, I got outside the statute of limitations for personal injury. And the law also says that when -- and I have this in my January 31st memo -- that for statute of limitations purposes -- excuse me, I needed some water. My throat is dry.

For statute of limitations purposes, the time relates back to when the original complaint was filed if it concerns the same parties and the same general facts, which is exactly what this was. And I also point out that my claim is for personal injury to my body, which the statute of limitations didn't run. It's for injury to my personal property, which has a different statute of limitations -- and as for injury to my real property, which has yet another statute of limitations.

And it's for a product that's installed in the building that causes damage to property, which has another statute of limitations. And that my claim is an unfair competition law action, which has yet another statute of limitations, which is four years, and that that four years is the one that is applied regardless. And I give youthe code section and the case that says that.

So, in short, what Grace has done with first ending it at 750 pages, which I had to look at and I thought I would find things that were wrong with it and I did -- with Ms. Lewis' statement, for example, that the Court of Appeals said in a sentence somewhere that Mr. Massa said there's no problem in breathing it. That's pure hearsay and it's just submitted for the reason of, you know, getting prejudice. It's not admissible evidence. And, actually, there was a summary judgment motion which Grace brought and

lost, and I gave you the rulings of the trial judge on Grace's summary judgment motion. And the trial judge, Mr. Fruin, found that Grace did not register its product with the State of California Department of Pesticide Regulations or with the federal government EPA and, therefore, it was illegal.

Making things even worse is, in my mind, is, Grace originally treated this as an -- and excuse me if I have the terminology in bankruptcy wrong -- treated this is as a substantial claim, meaning that it accepted that it had liability. The only question was how much. And then later, it never asked the Court for permission to amend its objection. But without getting leave to amend its objection, it filed its motion for summary judgment which contains an entirely new objection. The entirely new objection which wasn't in the original objection is the statute of limitations and the effect of the dismissal of the action.

So we have them proceeding without following the right procedure. If Grace had asked for permission to amend its objection instead of just doing it, we could have nipped the whole thing in the bud. Instead, we ended up having Grace file over a thousand pages and me in my naivete, reading it line by line and finding all the faults with everything that was being done and getting lost in the

details so that's -- I'm sorry I didn't have enough time to put all the exhibits together and discuss them fully with you. And I've explained it was just impossible to absorb the quantity of information presented and to extract from it the story.

But the bottom line is, there's absolutely no validity legally or factually to their motion for summary judgment and it's only because of lack of time that I wasn't able to tell that story better. But in the declaration that I did file which you did read I did go through it, and I did say that Grace didn't -- it failed to register with the California authority, failed to register with the federal authorities, and I also gave you the -- Exhibit 8 which is the order saying this is not about the merits of the case. And also I gave you the food and ag code section so you can see that this is illegal.

THE COURT: Okay. All right. Well, thank you for all of that Mr. Smolker. I guess what I'd like to first do is turn to your request that was made on January 15th. And just to clarify, when I said pleadings at the outset, all I meant was, I have reviewed every filing that you've made in connection with your claim and objection to summary judgment and various related requests and I've also read, obviously, W.R. Grace's. So when I used the word pleading before I just meant, you know, whatever you filed on the court

docket. I have read all of that stuff. And just to streamline this, I'd like to first address your request for additional time to either gather more exhibits, to get more information, to submit a more thorough objection to the summary judgment motion by Grace, as well as what appears to be a request under Rule 56 for an opportunity for you to sort of adjourn the summary judgment hearing in order to allow you to take additional discovery on Grace or whoever else you think might be appropriate. So that's what I'm going to address first, and then I'm going to -- why don't we just start there.

I've read -- I've heard everything you just said and I've read all of your papers, like I said, and unfortunately, I'm going to be forced to deny that request for two reason. One, I don't believe that there's any excusable neglect that would justify additional time for you to file any more exhibits, affidavits, pleadings, or anything in this case, because Grace did file their motion for summary judgment on August 3rd, 2020, with an objection deadline of August 17th, and you did file some kind of a late partial response to that on August 18th and requested that I give you additional time until November 5th.

When I held a hearing on September 17th, we agreed that you would have until December 16th, 2020, to file your supplemental summary judgment response. On the eve of that,

as you'll recall, you asked for additional time and although I was reluctant, I did give that to you under the condition that no more extensions would be granted. When you filed your further supplemental summary judgment response, it appeared that you then made another request for even more time to file further information, and I had a hearing on January 8th where I basically said that at that point, I wasn't prepared to give you any more time. You said that you wanted to file something and perhaps have it heard before the summary judgment hearing today.

You've now filed some documents. Given the great amount of time that you have had to respond to the summary judgment motion filed by W.R. Grace, I don't think that there's any need at this point for you to file anything else. And I think you're perhaps, you know, focused on maybe facts that you think might help your case or your opposition to summary judgment, when I think at this point, all we really have is summary judgment on the -- your proof of claim -- are legal arguments. So for all those reasons, I'm not going to find that there is excusable neglect here to justify any more filings. I think I've got a very good picture of what your arguments are and what the facts are in this case.

Furthermore with regard to any requests under 56(d) to take additional discovery and to delay the summary

Page 13 1 judgment hearing, in order to do that, you needed to 2 identify what additional discovery information or facts are needed and how if that information was disclosed those facts 3 4 would preclude summary judgment by creating a genuine issue 5 of material facts and why you were unable to obtain 6 discovery that you felt necessary to respond to that. 7 So for all those reasons, I will not be adjourning 8 the summary judgment hearing. I don't think there's any 9 need to take additional discovery at this point. And I 10 would like to turn now to the merits of the summary judgment 11 hearing which I heard you talk about and I'm actually in 12 agreement with you about some matters of that. But, as I 13 said before, I believe that this is purely a legal argument. 14 So, I guess, Mr. Higgins, will you be responding on behalf 15 of W.R. Grace today? 16 MR. HIGGINS: Yes, Your Honor, I am. 17 THE COURT: Okay. Okay. 18 MR. SMOLKER: Your Honor, may I respond to 19 something you just said? 20 THE COURT: If it's quick, you may. Is it going 21 to be quick? 22 I did not file my original MR. SMOLKER: Yes. objection late. I called up the court helpline and asked 23 24 them how things worked, and the way it works is you do not file things at the window. You put them in a box, a 25

collection box, and then they -- court personnel in the clerk's office collects it and then they file it. My document as my proof of service says and as I said, was overnight delivered on time so it was not late.

The second thing I'd like to say is that the immense amount time I had was taken up by the totally irrelevant things I was making of a list of to talk about and I just ran out of time and the tremendous number of things I had to put together to send to you in order to show you the entire story. And I'm glad you agree with some of the points because I think it's clear law that the decision of the Court of Appeals is not on the merits and that they have the statute of limitations wrong by the law. And I'm just sorry because I'm a bit of a perfectionist, and I just felt really bad about not having time to fill the blanks, and I did say in my --

THE COURT: Don't feel -- yeah, yeah. You shouldn't feel bad at all. I have like the best law clerk in the history of mankind and she has done all of the research on the legal arguments on motions for summary judgment, so now I'd like to turn to Mr. Higgins.

So, Mr. Higgins, Grace makes two arguments in connection with its summary judgment motion. The first argument is res judicata and the second one is the statute of limitations. After -- we looked at the case law that

you've cited. I think we're inclined to agree with Mr.

Smolker that it doesn't appear that there was any decision
by the California State Court on the merits of Mr. Smolker's
claim against W.R. Grace. It was simply that, you know, he
failed to take to trial the various claims that he had
against Grace. So while he's barred by res judicata from
bringing those claims against Grace in state court, it was
not clear to us that he'd be barred from bringing those
claims against Grace in a different court.

But before I have you respond to that, I think we found your other argument to be more persuasive depending on the applicable statute of limitations. So, Mr. Higgins, when did you think that the statute of limitations started to run? You know, we were thinking that it could have been as early as October 11th, 1996, when Mr. Smolker's condominium area was first treated by termite control or perhaps, you know, in October 10th of '97, when he filed his cross complaint against Grace or at the least latest, it seemed to us it would be November 4th, 1997, when he filed his first amended complaint counter claim against Grace in connection with various claims he had.

So when do you think the statute of limitations began to run for Mr. Smolker, Mr. Higgins?

MR. HIGGINS: Thank you, Your Honor. I can address the res judicata issue and the dismissal of this

Page 16 1 case, but -- separately -- but let's focus on the statute of 2 limitations issue you requested. THE COURT: Yeah. 3 MR. HIGGINS: Grace agrees that October 11th and 5 12th is the likely commencement of the running of the 6 statute of limitations because at that point under relevant 7 California law, all of the elements were either known or 8 suspected -- known to Mr. Smolker or suspected by Mr. 9 Smolker, i.e., the extermination had happened, clearly everybody knew about that. There's certainly statements in 10 11 Mr. Smolker's various complaints the there was discussion of 12 potential dangers in the -- in his fifth amended complaint 13 and in his first amended complaint -- looking to paragraph 14 16 of his 16th amended complaint, in particular. 15 Within a short period after October 11th and 12th, 16 Mr. Smolker began complaining of being poisoned by the 17 extermination to his neighbors, the (indiscernible), and 18 others. We can find that in the fifth amended complaint, 19 paragraph 22. After October --20 THE COURT: So Mr. Higgins, are you saying -- when 21 you say October 11th -- just to be clear -- you're saying 22 that in those amended complaints he was alleging that he was 23 complaining about these health issues back in October of 24 1996. Is that what you're saying? 25 MR. HIGGINS: Yes, Your Honor. I think that --

Page 17 1 THE COURT: Okay. 2 MR. HIGGINS: Here's what I would say, is, we believe that October 11th -- or 11th and 12th, excuse me --3 October 11th and 12th are the best dates --4 5 THE COURT: Of 1996? 6 MR. HIGGINS: -- to fix -- of 1996 -- to fix to 7 the one-year statute of limitations. I'll go into why it's 8 the one-year statute of limitations in just a moment. 9 But there are other facts to show -- to be adduced 10 from the first, fifth, -- first, second, and fifth amended 11 complaints which were attached to our initial summary 12 judgment motion to Ms. Lewis's declaration that show that 13 within a very, very short period after the extermination, 14 Mr. Smolker was complaining about ill effects of the 15 extermination. There's evidence in the first amended 16 complaint that prior to -- in August of 1996 -- prior to the 17 extermination, there had been meetings by the homeowners' 18 association. His then-wife Alice Graham, was the -- I 19 believe, the treasurer of the homeowners' association so 20 there was clear communication about all the relevant aspects 21 of the extermination even prior to the extermination itself. 22 But when you look at the post-October 11th and 12th period, you can see that, certainly within days or 23 24 weeks thereafter, Mr. Smolker is complaining to his

neighbors. He's complaining to the extermination company

which is -- and in fact, the extermination company went in on the 13th of December of 1996 to clean the place up -- to clean the condominium up.

So that under sort of any theory I think based on these facts that it was, as I said, October 11th or 12th, maybe a few days or a couple of weeks after that, but I think Grace believes on the balance of the facts that are available to us in Mr. Smolker's own pleadings that October 11th and 12th is the starting date.

THE COURT: Okay. Good. Now can I also turn your attention to the various causes of action that existed at the time of Grace's filing? Now I know that, you know, he filed various complaints and at one time, there was a -- you know, there were various claims, but according to your pleadings, I think that Grace believes that as of the petition date, there were only three remaining claims that had not yet been dismissed or dropped by Mr. Smolker, and that would have been fraud which I believe you say has a three-year statute of limitations; negligence which has a one-year statute of limitation; and strict liability which also has a one-year statute of limitation.

I know that there was a nuisance claim and I -- MR. HIGGINS: Yeah.

THE COURT: And you didn't mention it, but I know that that was something that Mr. Smolker had -- so could you

Page 19 1 first tell me what you believe the remaining claims to be in 2 existence as of the petition date, and then can you just confirm that those are in fact that applicable statutes of 3 limitations? 4 5 MR. HIGGINS: Yes. Yes, Your Honor. The best 6 exhibit for that is Exhibit 2 to Mr. Smolker's declaration 7 and -- which is an order that was entered by Judge Fruin 8 relating to this summary judgment motion and that was entered on December 13th of 2000, okay. So this is prior to 9 10 the petition date. 11 THE COURT: 2000 (indiscernible) yeah. 12 MR. HIGGINS: Yeah, the -- yes, the petition date 13 was April 2nd, 2001, Your Honor. 14 THE COURT: Yep. 15 MR. HIGGINS: So if you look at the second page, 16 there is a --17 THE COURT: Okay. MR. HIGGINS: -- table there where the Court has 18 19 laid out -- it says, cross complaint (indiscernible) Gary 20 and Alice Smolker pled in their fifth amended cross 21 complaint the following causes of actions against the 22 parties who are moving for summary judgment and/or summary 23 adjudication. Claim number 8 was strict liability to Grace 24 -- I'm ignoring all the parties other than Grace --25 THE COURT: Yeah, of course. Of course, yeah,

yeah.

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MR. HIGGINS: Negligent -- something called negligence per se towards Grace. Then you had 13 which was nuisance, 30 which was fraud, and 31 which was interference. Now it is true that in the -- in Ms. Lewis's declaration, it states that -- the 30th cause of action is fraud -- was still alive, had not been dismissed by the Court. But this -- and that was an error, Your Honor. My apologies for that. We did not have a copy of this order at the time. were relying on the appellate court's opinion. But when you look at Judge Fruin's order on the 3rd page, it says, the Court denies summary judgment to Grace. Court grants summary judgment to Grace -- excuse me -- the Court grants Grace summary adjudication on the Smolker's 13th, that is the nuisance; 30th, that is the fraud; and 31st causes of action, that is the interference.

THE COURT: Okay.

MR. HIGGINS: And it said, the Court requires further briefing as to the eighth cause of action which is the strict liability. So in Grace's view, the only causes of action that are -- were -- still alive as of April 2nd, 2001, were number eight, strict liability, and number nine, negligence, per se. And so --

THE COURT: Okay. And both of those only have a one-year statute of limitations?

MR. HIGGINS: Both of those only have a one-year statute of limitation under Section 340, parens 3, which is the -- which was at the time, the 1996 California Code of Civil Procedure -- was the applicable statute of limitations. So in Grace's view, the statute of limitations began on -- began running on October 11th and 12th of 1996, ran 'til October 11th and 12th, 1997. And it's interesting to note and I think you could go on inference from the fact that Mr. Smolker filed his first cross-complaint on October 10th, 1997, one day before the period of limitations expired.

THE COURT: Okay. Well, you know, at the very latest, the statute of limitations would have to have run on November 4th, 1997, but I think that there are good arguments for it possibly to have started earlier. However, in light of the fact that Grace didn't file for bankruptcy until 2001, I don't think we need to split hairs on the precise starting date because I do agree that he certainly was aware of it, certainly was suspicious, though that could not possibly have been told by the discovery rules.

So, I guess, Mr. Higgins, where I'd like to -- my last question for you is the following. I'm now satisfied that your statute of limitations argument, the second argument appears to be a winner. I really don't see any other way around it.

We had concerns about your res judicata arguments, along the lines of what Mr. Smolker had raised, which is that if there had been an adjudication by the California State Court on the merits of the claims, you know, that were ultimately, you know, adjudicated by that court, then we would have found that res judicata applied.

But the case law that we read that was in your brief and that we independently researched basically suggested that res judicata would only bar Mr. Smolker from refiling those claims in a California State Court, and that if the statute of limitations had not run out, he might have been able to raise those same claims in a different court.

So my question to you is, since it appears to the Court that you're going to win on the statute of limitations, you know, did you want an opportunity to argue that, you know, as a further ground that res judicata bars Mr. Smolker from having this Court look at those claims. I raise that because there's certainly a possibility that my order will be appealed.

And for purposes of appeal, while I'm going to rule on the one -- you know, your second argument in favor of Grace, at this point, I don't see persuasive case law that would allow me to rule in Grace's favor with regard to your first argument on the res judicata. But if you wanted an opportunity to brief that and if you think that there's

definitely case law out there that would allow me to find that res judicata is an additional argument, regardless of the fact that the merits weren't reached, I would allow you to file that briefing.

So would you like additional time to submit briefing or do you believe that we're probably right about the fact that res judicata is not going to get you to where you need to be and just hang your hat on the statute of limitations argument.

MR. HIGGINS: Your Honor, I would -- I think that the -- what I would -- I think I can accomplish this by, if you would bear with me just for a moment, at least making the arguments here.

THE COURT: Yeah, that's fine. And I guess what I would ask you, sir, just given the time that -- I'm not sure how much time I have left for the hearing.

MR. HIGGINS: Sure, sure.

THE COURT: But if you did want to submit additional briefing, I would be happy to consider a very informal letter brief just identifying the cases that you'd like us to look at if we somehow missed them. I mean, I think you understand my position on your argument. So to the extent that you have cases and argument that you could just put together in a letter, I would be happy to consider that before issuing my ruling.

MR. HIGGINS: Thank you, Your Honor. We will do that additional briefing in a letter, and we will get that to you as soon as we can.

THE COURT: Okay, so let's do this. Mr. Smolker,
I just want to turn to you, sir. I want to make sure that
you understand what the Court is ruling. We actually agree
with you, Mr. Smolker, about your res judicata argument.
It's a little shocking to me as a pro se litigant that
you're able to do all this, but it's impressive.

But on the statute of limitations argument, which is the second argument that W.R. Grace raised in its motion for summary judgment, it seems to the Court that the only two claims that were in existence as of the date that W.R. Grace filed for bankruptcy in April of 2001 were the negligence claim that you had against them and your strict liability claim.

Now, assuming that you and the Court are -- that we're right about the fact that res judicata doesn't bar you from making that argument before me, there is a one-year statute of limitations that are applicable to both negligence and strict liability. And if that's the case, at the very latest, I know that you knew that you were potentially exposed to products that could have been harmful to your health. At the very latest, I know you know that as of November 4th, 1997 because in your first amended

Page 25 counterclaim against Grace, you specifically raised those 1 2 health issues that you were concerned about. 3 So if the statute of limitations run at the very latest as of November 4th, 1997 and there's a one-year 4 5 statute of limitation for the strict liability and 6 negligence claim, that means that you were only permitted to 7 file those claims in a different court at the latest on 8 November 4th, 1998, which, of course, didn't happen. 9 So at this point, I'm going to be bound to follow 10 the law and enter an order granting W.R. Grace's motion for 11 summary judgment. 12 MR. SMOLKER: Excuse me, Judge, can I comment on 13 that? 14 THE COURT: Yes, you may, Mr. Smolker. 15 MR. SMOLKER: I would say you're halfway there. 16 Business and Profession Code Section 17200, which is the 17 unfair competition law, says that any unlawful, unfair or 18 fraudulent business act or practice is actionable under the 19 unfair competition law; that's Business and Profession Code 20 Section 17200 et seq. Unlawful covers business acts or 21 practices that violate any state or federal law. 22 I can give you a case on that: Charles J. Vacanti, 23 M.D., Inc. v. State Comp. Insurance Fund, 2001, 24 Cal. 4th 800, 827. The statute of limitations for actions brought 24 under the unfair competition law is four years. 25

Business and Profession Code Section 17208. The unfair competition law four-year statute of limitations admits of no exceptions, and thus applies to unfair competition actions based on violations of statutes with shorter limitation periods. Any action that is an unfair competition law cause of action is subject to the four-year period of limitations created by that section.

I give your attention to a California Supreme

Court case, Cortez v. Purolator Air Filtration Products

Company in 2000, 23 Cal. 4th 163, 178 through 179. All you

have to do is state that a federal law or a state law has

been violated and that you have been damaged. It doesn't

matter what you title your cause of action. All you have to

do is say that. All the complaints say that a state law and

a federal law have been violated, and it gives you the state

law and the federal law and it gives you the testimony of

all the government officials that say it was violated.

So I would say it was violated, but in any event, if not, it's just an issue. So the statute of limitations is four years because it's claimed in the allegations that a federal law and a state law were violated and, as a result of that, there was an injury. So I think you ought to consider that and read Business and Profession Code Section 17200 et seq. and the statute of limitations, which is 17208, and the Cortez v. Purolator case.

Now as to the fraud cause of action exist. Judge Janis, in all the papers you'll see, limited the number of pages I could have in my pleadings. And in my subsequent amended complaints, I put that they're done under protest and it's a violation of due process. I was not allowed to plead my cause of action. I had so many people and so many things to say and I was limited page-wise.

But, in any event the unfair competition law does it. Also, you focus on the personal injury. My claim, if you read the claim, is for property damage and personal injury and there are different statute of limitations for whether or not it's personal injury or strict liability for ultra-hazardous activities causing injury to real property, or strict liability action for causing injury to personal property. Real property or personal property. They are different than strict liability for personal injury.

So, they only gave you one statute of limitations, which is for personal injury, in a case that includes injury to real property, injury to personal property and unfair competition.

THE COURT: Okay, well, unfortunately, sir, I did not see any surviving claim in the California State Court for unfair competition or property damage, or anything else like that. The only claims that I saw surviving, as of the date of the petition of Grace's filing, was the negligence

and strict liability.

MR. SMOLKER: Well --

extent that, you know, you didn't have sufficient time or an opportunity to plead other causes of action, you know, unfortunately, if you had an issue with the way that the State Court handled your claims, you referenced that you had a due process violation there -- unfortunately, my hands are tied. You know, when you think that a state court has not done something that it should have and it's violated your due process rights, your only remedy at that point is to take it up on appeal within the state government.

There's nothing, as a federal court, that I can do to help you. Even assuming that you're right and that there were due process violations, you know, once you have those claims in big court, any arguments, defenses, (indiscernible), anything that you have there, objections, they have to be raised and adjudicated within the state court. And I as, the federal court, am not permitted to just jump in and say, well, you didn't do this. Because even if they did do something wrong, I don't have the jurisdiction to do that.

MR. SMOLKER: Your Honor, I won't argue with you on that.

THE COURT: Okay.

1 MR. SMOLKER: But I will disagree with you. 2 just want to say that the interesting issue you've just 3 highlighted is what is the claim? I say the claim isn't 4 measured by what they say the causes of actions were in the 5 complaint. The claim is whatever the claim was. The claim 6 was put forth in my claim. I filed that 392 and I said, I 7 claim damages for injury to personal property, to property 8 and to person. So, it --9 THE COURT: Right. So, my recollection is that 10 your proof of claim was based upon the California State 11 Court litigation. Like that it referenced that and in the 12 proof of claim it stated that the debt was incurred on 13 October 11, 1996. That's what your proof of claim said, 14 based on my recollection. 15 MR. SMOLKER: I don't have my proof of claim right 16 in front of me. I don't think my proof of claim says it's 17 based on California litigation. But, in any event, my proof 18 of claim is whatever my proof of claim was. 19 THE COURT: Yeah. 20 MR. SMOLKER: And I certainly show in my 21 allegations that my claim is illegal activity caused damage 22 and that is unfair competition. I wish I had the --23 THE COURT: Okay, well, yeah, we will take -- rest 24 assured, we will take a further closer look at your proof of 25 claim, Mr. Smolker. In the meantime, Mr. Higgins, when

would you like to submit your informal letter brief? I'm happy to give you whatever time that you may need. Do you want two weeks? Three weeks? What would you like?

MR. HIGGINS: I think two weeks would be helpful,
Your Honor.

THE COURT: Okay, Joan, on the docket can you note that W.R. Grace will file a letter brief regarding the res judicata argument? Mr. Smolker, I think that the Court and you are on the same page on that so I don't think I'll need any further briefing from you on that. I think that because the merits were not adjudicated, we don't believe that res judicata would bar Grace from bringing -- would bar you from bringing that claim against Grace in front of me.

Okay, so after I get that pleading and take a closer look at the proof of claim, we will issue an opinion, an order in connection with everything that was discussed today. Any last questions or comments before we conclude the hearing today?

MR. SMOLKER: Yes, when I called the help line for the Bankruptcy Court -- and, thankfully, they were very helpful -- I asked for the docket and they said I couldn't see the docket. I had to be registered for something. And I wasn't registered and I didn't have time to figure out how to register.

You told me at the first hearing that if I wanted

a transcript, I should ask the person recording this. I asked the person recording this and she told me that I needed a form. And she gave me the form number and she said I could find it on the court website. So, I went to the court website and it's not -- that form is not on the court website as being a form of the Delaware Bankruptcy Court. Eventually I found it.

Then she told me who to call to make arrangements to get the transcript, and I called those people and I paid them my money, and then she told -- and all along I asked is there a standing order so that there's only, you know, one person that's the official reporter? After I paid the money, she called me and told me, or she emailed and told me that there is a person that has a standing order and that she would cancel my payment to whoever I paid to get the transcripts.

Then I and an assistant who helped me called the person we were supposed to call to get it and we could never get through and we could never get the transcript. And after spending half a day on that, we decided to go elsewhere. So, it wasn't easy or possible yet to get the transcript.

I asked Mr. Higgins could he tell me when he asks for a transcript to just notify me that he asked for a transcript, so I could ask for a transcript also. He didn't

-- he wouldn't do that. He told me go look at the docket and it'll tell you what.

The end result of all this conversation is that a lot of my time, should I need it, to organize and put this stuff more clearly, was taken up with these unavoidable things that I don't think were my creation. And the time I needed to clarify and fill in the blanks, as you say, and show what would be proven, that was also taken up by this COVID-19. It took over a day trying to get through on the website to get an appointment to get a COVID-19 shot. And then, of course, I had to go there and it was in a different city and I had to find it.

And the time that you thought was reasonable, when I first wanted to make my motion for having more facts, you then decided -- and it was to be heard on the 24th, I believe -- you then decided -- and I think it was on the 20th -- that you would collapse that and hear it today. So, that cut me out of all the time to do that.

So, I'm very frustrated as a perfectionist, not having an opportunity to write something that would be better. But I do urge you to look at the claim, to realize that the lawsuit does say that there was personal property and real property and personal injury, and that the complaints do say that Grace violated different laws, and as a result of it violating these different laws, that I was

Page 33 1 injured. 2 Anyway, I really appreciate you giving me the time 3 to say this. Thank you. THE COURT: Sure. All right. Okay, so I think 4 5 we're done here. Mr. Higgins, did you have anything to add 6 before I conclude today's hearing? 7 MR. SMOLKER: Before -- how can I get a copy of 8 this transcript? I'll ask Tasha again? 9 COURT REPORTER: Judge, if I can interfere? 10 THE COURT: Yes. 11 COURT REPORTER: Transcripts are done by Veritext. 12 Veritext's phone number is 215-241-1000. From my 13 understanding, the standing order requires me to send audio 14 to Veritext after every hearing. So, from the last 15 hearings, they have been sent over, the three that was 16 requested. So, you can contact Veritext for the three 17 transcripts that was requested and is now on the docket. 18 And then I'll be sending this audio order as soon as we're 19 done at the hearing. 20 MR. SMOLKER: But do I just have to --21 COURT REPORTER: The contact person is Dion. 22 MR. SMOLKER: Do I just -- well, last time I 23 couldn't get Dion. Do I just have to -- and Dion said that 24 she didn't know the job number, she didn't know the account 25 number, she couldn't find it. Do I just have to contact

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1	Dion? Is that all I have to do?
2	COURT REPORTER: Then you just need to contact
3	Veritext and tell them that you're calling regarding a
4	standing order for W.R. Grace.
5	MR. SMOLKER: Okay, thank you so much.
6	COURT REPORTER: And they should be able to assist
7	you.
8	MR. SMOLKER: Thank you so much.
9	COURT REPORTER: You're welcome.
10	THE COURT: All right, Mr. Higgins, anything from
11	you before we conclude today's hearing?
12	MR. HIGGINS: Nothing further, Your Honor.
13	THE COURT: Okay. Well, thank you all for
14	participating in today's hearing and I guess we'll talk to
15	you soon. Thank you so much.
16	MR. SMOLKER: Good luck on the surgery. I hope
17	everything turns out. Bye bye.
18	THE COURT: Okay. Thanks so much, Mr. Smolker.
19	MR. SMOLKER: All right, bye bye.
20	THE COURT: All right, Kristin, why don't you stay
21	on? Okay.
22	(Whereupon these proceedings were concluded at
23	12:52 PM)
24	
25	

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1	CERTIFICATION
2	
3	I, Sonya Ledanski Hyde, certified that the foregoing
4	transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings.
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7	
8	Sonya Ledanski Hyde
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19	
20	Veritext Legal Solutions
21	330 Old Country Road
22	Suite 300
23	Mineola, NY 11501
24	
25	Date: February 2, 2021

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